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ABSTRACT

This issue provides a springboard for discussion for using media awareness as a catalyst for environmental change. Articles in this issue include: (1) "No More Business as Usual" (John De Mott); (2) "Covering the World" (Mark Hartsgaard); (3) "Earth's Star Rises in Hollywood" (Rosalind Silver); (4) "Artistic Activism Reaches the Young"; (5) "Where Does It Come From? Where Does It Go?" (Tyrone Cashman); (6) "The Greening of Corporate America" (Ian McGregor-Brown); (7) "To Market, To Market - Shopping with a Mission" (Connie Koenenn); and (8) "Our Devil's Bargain with Advertising" (Kalle Lasn; Cat Simril). Additional articles in the "Reflection/Action" Department include: (1) "Using TV Specials as Teaching Tools" (Myra Junyk); (2) "Frontline Mothers Deserve to Be Heard" (Sally Steenland); (3) "Finding Some Green Lessons in Fast Food" (Judith Myers-Walls); (4) "Ecological Reporters Awaken to Ethnicity" (Carlos E. Cortes); and (5) "Missing the People for the Trees" (Susanna Hecht; Alexander Cockburn). Additional resources and materials are provided for further research. (EH)

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Media&Values

A Quarterly Resource for Media Awareness

Summer 1990 Number 51

ED 423 151

MEDIA AND THE EARTH:
Challenging the Consumer Culture

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The Greening of Corporate America p. 14

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Media&Values

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Media&Values is published quarterly by the Center for Media and Values, an educational not-for-profit membership organization created to stimulate creative and critical thinking and positive action about the influence and impact of television and mass media in contemporary life.

Media&Values is the cornerstone of a pioneering media literacy movement to promote better understanding of how today's mass media environment influences individual and social values — personal attitudes and social behaviors as well as cultural, economic and political worldviews. *Media&Values* believes that a concern for values in today's media age is not so much knowing all the answers as asking the right questions. Working in collaboration with educational leaders, youth and family-serving organizations, religious denominations and academic researchers, the Center's goal is to empower families and individuals to learn what questions to ask and thus become more selective and knowledgeable consumers of today's mass media products.

In addition to publishing *Media&Values*, the Center creates educational resource materials for local use, organizes forums and conferences, and maintains an information and resource center on the media issues of our time. Funding for the Center comes from subscriptions and memberships along with individual donations, foundation grants and organizational co-sponsorships.

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Letters to the Editor: Comments and feedback are always welcome. Write: **Editor,** *Media&Values*, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

Executive Editor
Elizabeth Thoman, CHM

Senior Editor
Rosalind Silver

Assistant Editor
Kerry Gerot

Art Director
Phyllis Martinez

Editorial Staff
Jay Davis
Beth White

Administration and Business
Zahava Gerstenfeld

Promotion
Melinda McLain

Circulation
Sabina Howell

Typography/Production
Abington Graphics, Los Angeles

Editorial/Business Office
1962 South Shenandoah Street
Los Angeles, CA 90034
(213)559-2944

In Canada
85 St. Clair Avenue E, Room 500
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1M8

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NO MORE BUSINESS

Does today's media have the courage to tell

By John De Mott

The environment is "in" again this season. Thanks in part to all the hoopla of Earth Day 1990, the media have once again climbed aboard the environmental protection bandwagon.

But where have they been for the 20 years since the last Earth Day? While today's environmental tragedy was unfolding, where was the media?

While Spaceship Earth spun toward destruction as a habitat for all life, the press busied itself reporting the exploits of football players, the sexual adventures of entertainers and other junk news.

For a while during the euphoric days of 1970, it looked like things would be different. Following Earth Day 1970, mushrooming numbers of "environmental journalists"—a professional group that grew from one to more than a hundred by 1973—according to a 1989 study—demonstrated print media's sudden interest in ecologically-oriented stories.

"The first oil embargo in October 1973 ended the Golden Era of Ecological Conscience," one of eco-journalism's pioneers observed recently. Suddenly, it was economic news as usual, with Big Oil winning. Stories about alternative sources of energy and environmental hazards were once again relegated to environmental advocacy and ecological science periodicals.

Stories Lack Color

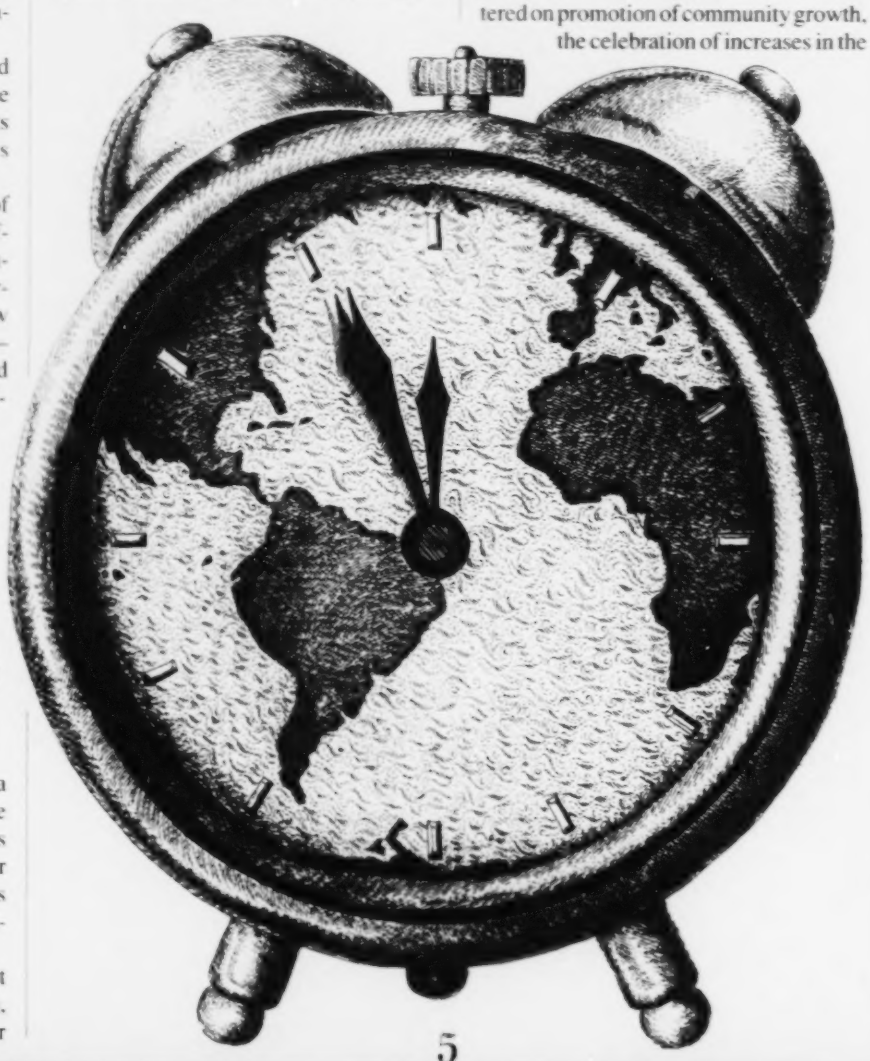
Television's growing importance as a news vehicle didn't help, either. With the exception of reports of disasters, stories about the environment lacked color. Their gradual progression and complex issues didn't lend themselves to 30-second explanations and high-energy visuals.

Occasionally, of course, stories about water pollution, erosion, deforestation, deterioration of the ozone layer or other environmental threats surfaced in newsprint or on television screens.

In such instances, the story was too often sensationalized. The finger of guilt was pointed at an offending official or industry. Seldom was the blame placed upon the lust for short-term material gain of modern society as a whole. Rarely was there responsible followup, let alone the kind of journalism that sounds a clarion call for drastic and immediate action.

Bewitched By Advertising

On the contrary, business as usual centered on promotion of community growth, the celebration of increases in the



AS USUAL

the truth about the Earth?

Our generation is the first in human history that has in its hands the power to determine whether the Earth remains habitable.

gross national product and the call for advertising-led booms in demand for consumer good and services. Clearly, under the spell of advertising U.S. media have seen themselves as engines of the economy rather than agents dedicated to fostering a new lifestyle.

In some cases, the desire to play down such news has resulted in actual suppression, as news organizations kill stories for fear they might frighten area residents or, worse still, offend local industries.

Even responsible media still find more space for stories about TV soap operas or the sore arm suffered by a baseball player than for news about threats to all life on the planet.

What kind of news judgment are we using?

Let's face it, even the AIDS epidemic is insignificant compared to what's happening to our environment. Yet news commentators continue to put down scientists blowing the whistle as alarmists or extremists. Lost in today's efforts to "Pollyanna-cise" our current dilemma is one important fact: The predictions made by the environmental "freaks" of 20 years ago now appear quite conservative and overcautious, compared to the dire scenarios being drawn by today's scientific community.

As the threat worsens, our profession faces an awesome responsibility. We must make some tough decisions. We must purge our news columns and broadcasting channels of junk news and dedicate them to consumer education about restoring the environment. It will cost astronomical amounts of money. Furthermore, many sacrifices will have to be made.

Last Minute Changes

The stakes, however, are enormous. Our generation is the first in human history that has the power in its hands to determine whether the Earth remains habitable. That is quite a responsibility.

Moreover, time is running out. Scientists say that we may have already passed the point of no return. If the human race is to survive, there must be a drastic—and immediate—change in modern society's lifestyles, values, educational levels and the media of mass communication.

That's us.

Do today's media have the the courage to report the environmental story in all its frightening reality?

Probably only if we as their audience have the courage to demand to be told the truth about the threat that faces us.

As readers, listeners and viewers what we don't need is reassurance that everything is going to be all right. It isn't, even under the most optimistic prognosis.

The best thing the media can do for us is to scare the living daylights out of us. Our prospects for survival are scary and no realistic assessment of them can fail to frighten an intelligent human being.

People must be moved to demand that government intervene on both national and international levels to prevent further damage and, we hope, reverse the process of destruction. As consumers we must be willing to accept a much lower standard of living and must demand that others do so, too. We must be eager to institute the taxes and sacrifice the luxuries that will pay for saving our planet.

It's often been observed that people get the media they deserve. For the sake of Spaceship Earth and all her inhabitants, it's time to demand the kind of media that the earth deserves. We no longer have 20 years to waste between Earth Days.

John De Mott is professor of Journalism at Memphis State University. Before becoming an educator he served for 16 years as a news reporter and editor for the Kansas City Star/Times.

Art Director Phyllis Martinez is an illustrator in Los Angeles.

Collective Awareness

Last winter, when three gray whales were trapped in Barrow, Alaska, I became fixed on their plight. So did millions of other people, and that was the astonishing thing. Understandably, many conservationists resented the media attention and money spent on a mere three animals while, at the same time, endangered species were being ignored. In a coarser vein, some scientists said the whales ought to perish: they weren't clever enough to migrate at the right time; their species, in fact, would be better off without them. But I was cheered by global sympathy for the grays. In a stroke of collective awareness, we saw ourselves in the stranded beasts: radically off course, bobbing for air, unnecessary for our species but struggling to stay alive.

***—Laurie Stone,* Tikkun**

COVERING THE WORLD:
Ignoring the Earth

By Mark Hertsgaard

A few years ago one of the *Washington Post's* senior editors walked into the paper's daily news meeting with what he thought was a pretty big story. Reputable scientists had concluded that there appeared to be a hole in the ozone layer. Widespread use of aerosols, refrigerants and air conditioners had released so many chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the heavens that the stratospheric coating that protects the earth from the full force of the sun's ultraviolet rays had been damaged, perhaps irreparably. An epidemic of skin cancer was but one of the dire foreseeable consequences.

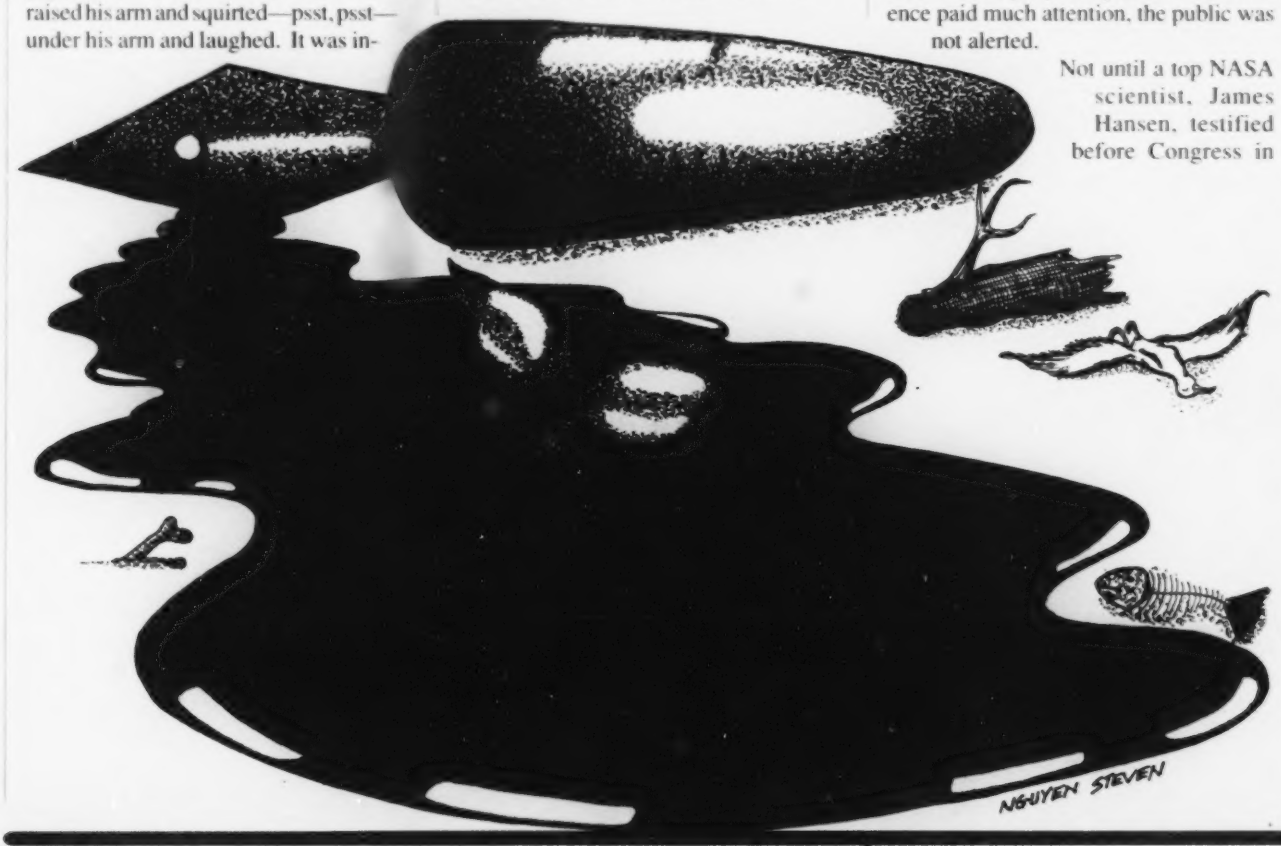
The editor pitched the story for page one, but *Post* editor Ben Bradlee was not impressed. According to one source at the paper, "Bradlee just sat back in his chair, raised his arm and squirted—psst, psst—under his arm and laughed. It was inconceivable to Ben that using his aerosol deodorant in the morning could have any environmental effect.

"If you're the national editor," the source continued, "and you know the executive editor is going to raise his arm and act like he's spraying underarm deodorant when you pitch an ozone story, you're not going to give it a real hard push."

Ben Bradlee was typical of his profession. "Even five years ago the environment was not in the forefront of our minds at any of the big papers," said the *Post*'s national editor, Karen DeYoung. "Certainly it is now. I think people started getting really scared. When people began to realize that this was real stuff and concerned us now—not 10 generations down the road—it made a difference."

Clearly, the summer of 1988 deserves much of the credit for this shift in journalistic, and public, consciousness. It was a hellish season. If you were a farmer, you watched your land bake hard as stone. If you lived in the city, you boiled like a turnip in a pot. But the summer did have one salutary result: It woke people up to the dangers of the greenhouse effect, to the probability that the earth is gradually overheating from all the smoke and soot Industrial Man has spewed into the atmosphere. Scientists had long feared such a prospect. They theorized that global warming might bring widespread drought and famine, unleashing Genesis-like floods the world over, as icecaps melted and oceans submerged their shores. But because few people in positions of influence paid much attention, the public was not alerted.

Not until a top NASA scientist, James Hansen, testified before Congress in



June of 1988 that the greenhouse effect was no longer merely theory but fact did the media really take notice. The *New York Times* put the story above the fold on page one and gave the subject extensive play the rest of the summer. So, to lesser degrees, did other news organizations. Finally, the greenhouse effect had made it onto the national agenda.

An Old Story

Except for nuclear war—the ultimate environmental threat—global warming is probably the single most worrisome storm cloud on our bleak environmental horizon. Yet for years no one but environmentalists seemed to care. "When the greenhouse effect began making headlines last summer, someone showed me the first article I ever wrote on the subject," recalled Philip Shabecoff, author of the *Times*' front-page greenhouse story. "It was from 1979, and it said many of the same things about what was likely to happen as last year's stories did. It ran on page 42. I guess you could say it took nine years for the greenhouse story to graduate to page one."

Of course, 1988 was also the year when forest fires ravaged Yellowstone, the Mississippi dried up, garbage and medical wastes soiled East Coast beaches and pollution-weakened seals died *en masse* in the North Sea. Along with such recurrent dangers as acid rain, toxic wastes and ozone depletion, these widely-reported disasters further concentrated the collective journalistic mind on the gathering environmental crisis.

As a result, the environment moved onto the front page in 1989 as never before. The *New York Times* sounded the alarm about the health hazards posed by the breakdown of federal nuclear-weapons production plants; *60 Minutes* parked a national uproar with its report on the cancer risks for children eating apples sprayed with Alar. Most striking of all, *Time*, in a rare departure, chose Endangered Earth as its Man of the Year, devoting nearly an entire issue to the plight of the planet.

But as heartening as the media's newfound interest is, it is not enough. If our children, to say nothing of their children, are to inhabit a survivable world, some very fundamental changes must be made. Because of their enormous power to shape public opinion, the men and women who are in charge of the media have an immense responsibility in the struggle to avert ecological catastrophe.

"We don't have time for the traditional approach to education because we don't have generations, we have years," says Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute. "The communications industry is the only instrument that has the capacity to educate on the scale needed and in the time available."

Why didn't the press trumpet the urgency of the greenhouse problem earlier? The simple fact is that the environment has not traditionally been seen as a very important news story by reporters or by their editorial and executive superiors. Even now, at most of the nation's major news organizations, the environment is not considered a bona fide beat. Neither CBS nor NBC News has even one full-time environmental correspondent; ABC News only named its first two in 1989. All this stands in marked contrast to CNN, where owner Ted Turner's strong personal interest has ensured extensive and continuing coverage. Turner's eight-member environmental unit, established in 1980, is expected to produce a story a day for the network, according to vice president of environmental policy for Turner Broadcasting, Barbara Pyle.

Even now at most major news organizations the environment is not considered a bona fide beat.

Underplaying Ecology

CNN notwithstanding, when it comes to getting their work on the air or in the paper, environmental reporters often find themselves victims of a journalistic value system that underplays ecological issues. "I think the greenhouse effect and CFCs are a hell of a lot more important to the future of the world than the U.S. budget deficit," said David Goeller, who covered environmental issues for the Associated Press for four years before joining Environmental Action, an advocacy group, in 1988. "But at both the *Times* and the *Post* environmental reporters are competing for space against whatever this week's diplomatic crisis is."

The *Times* and the *Post* are the two most politically powerful newspapers in the country, and their coverage tends to shape the news agenda of the networks and the rest of the press as well. Stories they downplay have little chance of reaching a national audience. Environmental stories in particular have often suffered this fate, largely because both papers were until recently run by editors who were not exactly ardent ecologists.

Nevertheless, even those distressed by Ben Bradlee's previous attitude say he "turned around a lot in 1989," following a trip to Brazil with a group of U.S. senators. National editor DeYoung stressed that the Post recently beefed up its environmental staff to three people and, for the first time, hired a full-time reporter on energy policy. "There's much greater receptivity now to putting those stories on the front page," she said.

Despite these reforms, environmentalists consistently rate the *Times* as superior to the *Post*, singling out the *Times*' Shabecoff as the main reason. Shabecoff modestly explains that he enjoys one major advantage over his competitors: He's been working this beat for more than 10 years now. "These are complex issues," he says. "But the turnover of environmental reporters at most news organizations is very rapid. You really can't do it that way. You have to build up a storehouse of knowledge."

It was under editor Max Frankel in 1988 that the *Times* published its long-running exposé of radioactive contamination of land and water supplies at nuclear-weapons production facilities by Du Pont and other corporate contractors for the Department of Energy. The story was hardly underplayed, with more than 100 stories published and continuing followup. Still, the national security angle probably served as an additional journalistic incentive to exposure.

The troubling question is, why did it take the national press so long to recognize this story in the first place? As Peter Dykstra of the environmental organization Greenpeace observes: "Nobody in the press paid any attention to the weapons plants until the *Times* made something of a crusade about it. All those problems existed 10 years ago, but no-

body knew about it except about 200,000 environmentalists, who couldn't get anyone in the press to listen to them."

Courting Disaster

A second convention that distorts environmental coverage is the media's ahistorical, crisis-driven approach. News is defined as what's happening today, not what might happen tomorrow. As a result, the media's favorite environmental stories are disaster stories, preferably ones boasting gripping TV visuals. The Exxon Alaska oil spill, with its oozing shorelines and sad-faced sea otters, is but the most recent case in point.

Pegging news coverage only to events means that reporters don't arrive on the scene until after the damage is done: The problem at hand is therefore never exposed until it is too late to do much but (try to) clean up the mess. Moreover, some of the most ominous hazards we face—such as global warming and ozone depletion—have been decades in the making and will be years in manifesting themselves fully. That they are gradual rather than sudden processes makes them no less deadly. They just don't yield daily photo opportunities tailored to the eye-blinking attention span of the media. How do you take a picture of the earth getting hotter?

Consistent Coverage

"There isn't a 'Stop the presses!' kind of development on the environmental story every day," declared Tom Winship, former editor of the *Boston Globe*. "This is not event coverage. We need to persuade the media to cover the environmental story consistently. Sure, it's a slow story but they've got to change their attitudes about what makes a story."

Winship's point is well taken. In one respect, though, I think the media would do well to adopt even more of a crisis mentality. Just as Walter Cronkite used to make a point of reminding viewers at the end of every broadcast of the *CBS Evening News* about the American citizens being held hostage in Iran—"And that's the way it is, the twenty-third day of American hostages in captivity," the anchorman would intone—so today's journalists could make a point of reminding people about the environmental crisis that in effect holds each one of us hostage.

Why couldn't newscasts occasionally lead into commercials with graphics depicting that day's smog levels in major world cities, or number of acres of rain forest destroyed, or tons of topsoil eroded, or plant and animal species wiped out?

"We know what changes there were yesterday in the spot market price of oil, but the fact that many tons of carbon were released into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels, which is the really important energy data, does not get mentioned," Lester Brown said. "This represents a dangerously outdated set of values about the use of public resources."

"We need to persuade the media to change their attitudes about what makes a story."

Tom Winship, former editor, *Boston Globe*

Fear of Advocacy

Of course, news organizations could make such changes easily enough. The obstacles are not technical but ideological. To many in the American press, such journalism smacks of advocacy, partisanship, editorializing—all the sins an objective professional is supposed to resist. Yet even within the parameters of mainstream journalism, argued Tom Winship, "there are legitimate ways to do advocacy journalism—how prominently you display a given story, how often you cover it, how much editorial support you offer."

Winship points to *Time*'s Planet of the Year issue as a model. "Nothing had a greater impact on establishment journalism's treatment of the environment than that piece. It was useful, crusading journalism such as we haven't seen in years."

What was remarkable about the Planet of the Year issue was not only the apocalyptic fervor with which *Time* described the earth's problems but also its enumeration of specific cures. Each section of the report included a box headlined "What Nations Should Do," which listed four or five concrete steps to counter global warming, the extinction of species and other environmental threats. At the end of

EARTH BEAT: What news organizations can do

1. Make the environment a priority. Now that the cold war is over, the struggle to save the planet figures to be the biggest news story of the next 20 years. The environment clearly deserves as much attention as the drug issue, another story that offers no daily news pegs but still gets saturation coverage.

2. Make the environment a high-prestige beat, not a training ground or exile post, and make it worth a reporter's while to stay on it. Educate reporters on all beats, be they national security, finance or local politics, to recognize the environmental aspects of their stories.

3. Take the initiative. Good environmental reporting is often investigative; give journalists time and freedom from daily stories to pursue ambitious topics.

4. Analyze the political economy of environmental change and expose obstacles to reform. One story idea: Research the campaign contributions of those members of Congress serving on the committees considering the Clean Air Act to see how much money from the oil, auto and electric-utility industries they've received.

5. Cover America's dissidents. Broaden the range of "quotable" sources to include such experts as Barry Commoner. And pay attention to the environmental movement, especially the grass-roots groups on the front lines of the struggle.

6. Remember above all else how little time there is. At this late date, to cover the world while ignoring the earth is sheer folly.

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the report was a full page titled "What The U.S. Should Do." One need not endorse all of *Time*'s suggestions to appreciate the value of journalism that does not merely describe problems but also prescribes solutions. Call it advocacy journalism, but at this late date we need as much of it as possible.

Establishment Pillars

Ralph Nader, the long-time consumer and political activist, argues that the press should do more reporting of environmental success stories. "There's lots happening around the country with solar energy they could be reporting," said Nader, "but it's not a graphic story, and there's no official support for solar from the Department of Energy. Plus, it's easier to cover conflict at the end source."

It's true the press generally shuns playing a leadership role, though that's not the only reason aggressive coverage of environmental issues is rare. Another impediment is that meaningful solutions to these problems will require challenging some of America's most powerful institutions and interest groups.

"What's needed now is an analysis of what it's going to take to act," said environmentalist and writer Barry Commoner. "In our capitalist system the owner of the means of production is free to produce whatever he wants, however he wants. So the quest to improve the environment immediately raises a very fundamental—in fact, taboo—question: Does society have the right to intervene in the rights of property owners? Until the necessity for this action is made clear, the will to do so will not develop."

Despite their readiness to adopt the buzzword "green" created by some of Europe's ecologically-minded political parties, the nation's leading news organizations remain central pillars of the American establishment. As such, they are decidedly unreceptive to Green party tenets that challenge capitalist orthodoxy and reject the conventional equations of economic growth with prosperity. Nor do they tend to do much tough coverage of their fellow corporate giants. As Nader observes, "Look at all the stories on the destruction of the Amazon rain forest. Do you ever see the names of any multinational corporations mentioned?"

The question facing us may well be, as Daniel Zjwerdling, the former environmental reporter for NPR, phrases it, "Can we survive with the automobile?" But what newspaper or network will press this issue and risk alienating companies responsible for tens of millions of dollars' worth of advertising?

As *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker, one of the few mainstream commentators to champion ecological concerns, says, "It's not in the nature of institutions like the *Times* or *Post* to stir up the community on very broad social questions."

But saving the environment is hardly a controversial cause. Indeed, the public may well be ahead of the so-called opinion leaders in government and the press on this issue, just as it was a few years ago when there was clear support for a bilateral nuclear-weapons freeze. In any case, the press has an obligation to illuminate the dimensions and roots of the environmental crisis and identify and analyze potential solutions.

"By keeping people informed about the critical effect each individual can have on the future of the planet, we will be encouraging new generations of environmentalists to do everything they can do to take bold steps for earth."

Barbara Pyle, v. p. environmental policy, Turner Broadcasting

Mark Hertsgaard is media critic for Rolling Stone *magazine and the author of* On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency. *Copyright, 1990, Straight Arrow Publishers, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Los Angeles Times Syndicate.*

Illustrator Steven Nguyen is an art student at California State University, Los Angeles.

Recycling Reuses Media Resources

By Hal Bogotch

Over a billion trees will be cut down this year to meet the U.S. demand for paper. Imagine your local newsstand with a sign: "Closed until further notice—forgot to plant trees." Impossible? Hardly, if predictions of a widespread "paper drought" prove to be true.

There have been estimates that 35,000 trees would be saved if recycled paper was used instead of virgin pulp in the production of a single Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. But recycled paper costs more—due to several factors including subsidies for virgin paper production, the sale of National Forest timber at below market prices and bleaching and de-inking chemical processes which have environmental consequences of their own.

To encourage conservation Earth Island Institute recently launched a grassroots campaign inviting conscientious publishers to plant trees to replenish those sacrificed to the printing presses. Besides their own *Earth Island Journal*, as many as 20 other magazines have taken the "Green Pages" Pledge including *Parenting Magazine*, *The New Age Journal*, *Greenpeace Magazine* and *In Context*. Many of these periodicals are printed on recycled paper and a few are using non-toxic soybean inks. Most aim to plant at least the number of trees consumed to produce each issue. Among the many organizations willing to share their tree-planting expertise are Global ReLeaf, P.O. Box 2000, Washington, DC 20013, (202)667-3300; Earthstewards Network, P.O. Box 10697, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110, (206)842-7986; TreePeople, 12601 Mulholland Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, (818)753-4600.

As for *Media&Values* we are now printing on recycled paper, although cover stock is not available yet. And we are the first Southern California magazine to take the "Green Pages" pledge. (For more information about the pledge, contact *Earth Island Journal*, 300 Broadway, Ste. 28, San Francisco, CA 94133.) We'll plant a tree to honor this issue.

Hal Bogotch is a freelance writer in Los Angeles and a Media&Values *volunteer.*

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT:

EARTH'S STAR RISES IN HOLLYWOOD

By Rosalind Silver

Blood streamed from its severed horn as the wounded rhino quivered on its knees. Its heartwrenching bellows pierced the air as Kate and MacGyver exchanged anguished glances. The ranger slowly shook his head. Reluctantly and painfully, Kate raised the rifle to her shoulder to fire the shot that would put the rhino out of its misery. The shrinking tally of the world's 3,500 black rhinos would soon be one less.

This emotional scene from "Black Rhino," an episode of *MacGyver*, ABC's Monday night action/adventure series, had one immediate effect, according to executive producer John Rich. The ABC switchboard lit up with calls from excited viewers who were outraged that an entertainment show would wound a rare animal just for an hour of television.

In fact, the wounded rhino was a $40,000 animatronic replica, and its piercing bellows were the voice of a skilled actor. "It was a real risk," says executive producer Steve Downing. "We had to order the rhino before the script was completed."

A line indicating that "all animal injuries shown are simulated" had been planned, but removed at network request, Rich says. "I'm sure they were sorry they took it off," he chuckled. The disclaimer will be shown with future reruns of the program.

If nothing else, the show, one of several on environmental themes broadcast during five seasons of *MacGyver*, illustrates entertainment television's power to personalize and enlist viewer sympathy for what otherwise might be an abstract environmental issue.

Sending A Message

"It was Samuel Goldwyn who said, 'If you want to send a message to the public, call Western Union,'" Rich notes. "But I think you can incorporate an issue in your plot if you're careful to avoid preaching. We do try to give two points of view when there are two. That was less of an issue in this episode, but when we dealt with logging, for example, there was more controversy.

"The feedback we get shows how many people think these issues are important—and I think there's a huge silent audience that agrees with us beyond the people we hear from. In addition, we reach a large audience of children to whom environmental ideas are new."

Environmental themes require extensive research to insure accurate portrayal of issues, Downing says. Although *MacGyver* producers have been grappling with the task for years, the Environmental Media Association, a non-profit organization formed to encourage Hollywood's use of environmental themes, is currently making the task easier for many production teams.

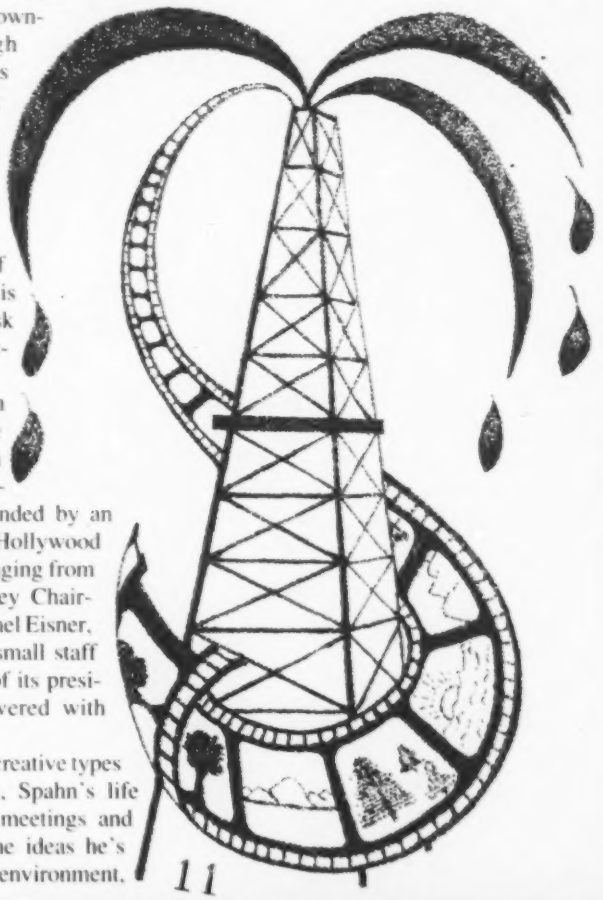
Since its founding in the spring of 1989, the environmental action agenda of the young non-profit organization, funded by an impressive board of Hollywood movers and shakers ranging from Norman Lear to Disney Chairman of the Board Michael Eisner, is enough to keep its small staff running and the desk of its president Andy Spahn covered with yellow stickys.

Like the Hollywood creative types he hopes to influence, Spahn's life consists of meetings, meetings and more meetings. But the ideas he's pitching center on the environment, as a plot device, the preoccupation of a character, or merely the presence of a recycling bin on the set or an Earth Day T-shirt on a character's back.

EMA's role can extend from helping to create a storyline to match making between writers and producers and environmental experts. But Spahn's mission and sense of urgency keeps him pushing to set up meetings with creative staffs to sell the environment as a plot device.

Urgent Message

"We only have a 10–12 year window of



opportunity to turn things around before facing environmental disaster. I think people are beginning to recognize the seriousness of the problem. But the movement from fossil fuels and over-consumption to a more realistic lifestyle won't be an easy one. We can help make more people aware of the problem."

In the year of the environment, the lineup of conservation-flavored plots is growing, as *Murphy Brown* tackles recycling, *Designing Women* deals with furs and disposable diapers and *Alf* lobbies to stop production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 1990, itself, of course, represented a major movement of environmental issues from PBS documentary units to prime time with *The Earth Day Special*, a star-studded extravaganza designed to tailor the message for the entertainment audience.

A deceptively simple plot starred Bette Midler as the endangered Mother Earth and Robin Williams as an ecologically-awakening Everyman supported by a multitude of famous faces, including Michael Keaton in a new role as a repentant environmental villain. The action provided a framework for blending earth-saving tips with music, humor and environmentally-flavored scenes from top-rated shows. Familiar faces and formats took the edge off the political message. Suddenly the environment was just part of television.

But every television day isn't Earth Day. The challenge for both EMA and environmentally-concerned creators is to keep the momentum going throughout the television season and beyond.

"EMA has been very responsive to the needs of my writers," notes Fran McConnell, executive vice president for comedy and Columbia, the studio responsible for *My Two Dads*, *Designing Women* and *Who's the Boss?* among others, all shows that have recently featured environmental themes.

Visits With Friends

McConnell notes that Columbia's work with the nonprofit group was comparable to previous relationships with activist groups like the Council on Alcoholism. "We invite them in, as we did with EMA, the organization presents its case and the information it can provide. After the initial meeting, anyone involved is free to pitch an idea. As in most creative development, a lot of what surfaces comes from writer's and producer's personal lives."

McConnell believes that environmental "touches"—characters who recycle, environmental slogans on clothing—can be effective even when not otherwise referred to in TV storylines. "After all, these characters visit with 40 to 60 million viewers each week. The audience feels that they're friends. I think the young characters on many of our shows are particularly effective in reaching younger members of the audience."

But would a disposable diaper company, for example, want to advertise on the pro-cloth episode of *Designing Women*? Well, perhaps not, but McConnell believes that what writers and producers call "balance" can eliminate most problems with advertisers and unsympathetic viewers.

"Dialogue can provide an opportunity for shows to air different sides. If you do your job, a sensitive advertiser wouldn't be likely to have a problem with it for the most part."

But balance and even factual accuracy are not the only puzzle writers of environmentally-oriented television must solve. Even more acute is the need to combine the "message" with the medium's first goal—entertainment.

It isn't always easy.

This challenge was faced by Victor Fresco, the writer of *Stayin' Alive*, an *Alf* episode on the effects of pollution on the ozone layer. As the show's plot unfolds, Alf, the "alien" puppet character, denounces human indifference to earthly degeneration. The protest campaign he unleashes leads to a climactic scene between Willie, the father of Alf's host family, and a smarmy executive at a fictional company that manufactures CFCs. When the company attempts to buy him off, Willie is tempted. His change of heart and final ringing denunciation of the company's polluting ways neatly capsulize an ongoing struggle in our consumption-centered economy.

Conveying this message and being funny, too, is the challenge for environmental themes in situation comedy, Fresco says. "This kind of show is usually slower to write. I do worry about hitting the audience too heavily. A show where you point the finger at somebody (in this case, of course, a fictional polluter and not a real chemical company) is more difficult than just having characters get involved in recycling."

The challenge of combining an environmental message with entertainment was faced from another perspective by the producers of *Network Earth*, the new environmental magazine under development by Turner Broadcasting System and scheduled for first airing on the TBS system in August 1990.

As Teya Ryan, senior producer, said in a recent speech, the colorful, magazine-style show is meant to draw in a general audience who might not ordinarily be drawn to environmental issues. "I want them to say to themselves, 'Oh, that's entertaining enough for me to watch it.' The question is, how do you reach an audience when your bottom line is ratings. This show will reach a million people every week—that's the low estimate, and I'm happy with that."

"A lot of people take an ostrich approach to the environment. We can help get their heads out of the sand."

Alan Horn, managing partner, Castle Rock Entertainment

Another balancing act pits the complexity of environmental issues against audience attention spans. Earlier drafts of the *Alf* ozone episode's script had more factual information than the version that aired, Fresco said. "EMA was very helpful in providing the research assistance and background we needed."

He noted that Producer Paul Fusco, the co-creator of *Alf*, was interested in an environmental theme, and that Alf, the character, was "already environmentally active" in information for children and promos for Earth Day.

Hope for the Future

Television viewers know the personalities of their favorite characters intimately, so their environmental activities need to be rooted in previous interests to be fully

believable.

When Hope on *thirtysomething* became an environmental activist during the 1989-90 season, executive producer Marshall Herskovitz saw her new commitment as part of something even deeper than environmental concerns, something he calls "the radicalization of Moms."

The phenomenon, he says, "is something I've seen a lot in the people I know. New parents, especially women, look at their children, and the problems of the world take on new meaning. Suddenly they feel responsible and they're no longer too embarassed to do something about it."

When the pregnant Hope tells the audience at a Congressional hearing on a local incinerator project "I don't want dioxin in my breast milk" she's speaking for all the mothers who are currently fighting for the future, Herskovitz believes.

Two recent examples of environmentally-themed television shows are MacGyver*'s "Black Rhino" episode which dealt with the poaching of rhino horns and* Murphy Brown*'s "Whose Garbage Is It, Anyway?" in which the FYI news team was challenged to practice what they preach to their viewers about recycling and the environment.*

But that doesn't mean such an episode is easy.

Two representives from EMA spent hours with *thirtysomething*'s creative team as they struggled to zero in on a particular issue and complete research. Selection of the incinerator project filled several needs, Herskovitz said. "We knew we couldn't get involved in an issue that was current in Philadelphia (where the show is set) right now. But we still needed an issue that would reflect the real concerns of people around the country."

In general, the sponsoring network, ABC, is "supportive, but nervous," Herskovitz says "They (the network's Standards and Practices Department) fought us up and down about every sentence in Hope's speech. Of course, being evenhanded is their job. But it is a complex issue, and it was obvious that they were terribly uncomfortable."

Persistent Effort

In fact, network television is generally more comfortable with issues that are already depoliticized, commented Kathryn Montgomery, who teaches television at the University of California/Los Angeles and is the author of *Target: Prime Time: Advocacy Groups and the Struggle Over Entertainment Television*, a study of media lobbying efforts by various groups. "The environment is hot right now. But there could be a backlash if public interest peaks and counter efforts from industry and other supporters of business-as-usual grow."

Knowing how to reduce complex issues to personal reactions is a first step in a successful lobbying effort. But long-term media influence also requires the willingness to build a lobbying effort slowly from a stable base and prepare for years of effort.

"Even with a trend building for more sophisticated techniques and greater industry leadership, the Enviromental Media Association is unusual because its backers include some of the most influential people in the industry. But even they will find that they have to proceed according to the rules of the game."

Of course, making a profit is still the goal and most of EMA's movers and shakers have demonstrated they know how to do that. They also understand their potential for influence, according to Alan Horn, managing partner of Castle Rock Entertainment, producers of the summer-1989 hit *When Harry Met Sally*, and a founding board member of EMA.

> *"Those of us in the entertainment industry must do our part to educate people to become part of the solution."*
>
> **Ted Danson, actor, *Cheers***

Horn also knows that every environmentally-friendly effort isn't destined for success. A Castle Rock series proposal, *Homeroom*, which would have featured an elementary class involved in environmental projects, didn't make it with ABC.

The initial episode of another environmentally-flavored series proposal, the action-adventure show *The Elite*, was scheduled to air as a TV movie in September 1990, according to co-producer Terry Keegan. Keegan said its plot would center around the theft of plutonium.

"There's no doubt that these issues can be hard to incorporate into a storyline," Horn says. As entertainers with a national audience, we're in a unique position. A

lot of people take an ostrich approach to the environment. We can help get their heads out of the sand."

Having people like Michael Eisner of Disney involved is important, Horn says. But he doesn't forget that much of the genesis for EMA grew out of the concerns of his wife, Cindy Harrell-Horn, also an EMA founder. She became active in Heal the Bay, a Southern California coastal action group, and other environmental issues after their two children were born. Like Hope Murdoch, Harrel-Horn was concerned about the world her children would grow up in. And with the media as their instrument, she and her husband are doing something about it.

Clearly, *MacGyver*'s series of environmental shows, including segments on bears, golden eagles, logging and toxic waste as well as rhinos, also reflect the views of its creators. ("My daughter's an environmental lawyer and we influence each other," Rich says.)

Thus, like charity, environmental activism seems to begin at home. Although the education efforts and research support of groups like EMA can build awareness and help environmental concerns surface, the key to their appearance on television seems to be based mostly on the personal interests of the producers, writers and actors interested enough to research, create and enact them — and if necessary to fight for them.

At the same time, Earth Day itself and the crescendo of building environmental concerns leading up to it helped create a climate in which expressing those concerns is acceptable — even on network television.

Nevertheless, even if television accepts environmentalism as a plot staple, real world problems can't be solved as easily as MacGyver caught the rhino poachers. But casting environmentalists and polluters as heroes and villains, if it continues, will surely have some effect on the public opinion of the '90s.

The rest is up to us.

And as Bette Midler said on Earth Day, "I live on this planet with all of you."

That's not just television.

Rosalind Silver is senior editor of Media&Values.

Illustrator Michele Bradley is a graduate student in painting and drawing at California State Univ., Los Angeles.

Artistic Activism Reaches the Young

By Kerry Gerot

A Native American Indian prophecy tells of a sick and dying planet that will be saved from pollution and exploitation by Rainbow Warriors who rise up from all the people of the world.

Rock singers, actors and athletes involved in environmental causes may not be the heroes envisioned by the ancient legend, but thanks to their media-driven celebrity, they have the status of heroes, especially with young people. Many are using this status to celebrate — and promote — the need to take better care of our earth. The following are two of the more interesting examples of celebrities reaching youth with an environmental message.

Reaching Children

One way to reach kids is cartoons, and that's what Turner Broadcasting System is planning for fall 1990 with its environmentally-based series *Captain Planet and the Planeteers*.

> *"We can only hope* Captain Planet *is watched by a generation of children before it's too late."*
>
> **Randall Hayes, Rainforest Action Network**

In an unusual twist for a syndicated series, major actors and actresses will provide the characters' voices, adding star power to the child-appeal of the action-adventure series.

The series opens when Gaia (Whoopi Goldberg), the spirit of the earth, wakes up to a troubled environment. To aid her in rescuing the earth from pollution and other environmental dangers, she summons helpers from among the young people of the five continents and gives them magic rings enabling each of them to control an element of nature (Earth, Fire, Water, Wind and Heart). But only when their powers are combined do they produce the superhero Captain Planet. In successive episodes his extra-natural force will save the earth from the rampages of such polluting villains as Hoggish Greedly (Ed Asner), Verminous Skumm (Jeff Goldblum), Dr. Blight (Meg Ryan) and Looten Plunder (Richard Gere). The first episode hammers home the point that no one is too young to get involved. To help kids do that, each episode will end with a 30-second tag/epilogue to tell viewers how they can help the environment themselves or with their families. Besides producing the cartoon, TBS will donate 10 percent of all royalties to environmental causes.

Reaching Teens

U2, Sting, Eurythmics, Peter Gabriel and Sade are only a few of the well-known rock musicians who become *Rainbow Warriors* in the 31 tracks of a top-selling album sponsored by Greenpeace. Hits chosen by the artists themselves convey a message of hope and awareness of the world and the challenges it faces from manifold environmental dangers.

The album's 1989 United States and international release followed an initial run of a half million copies that sold out on its first day of availability in the Soviet Union. The combined strength of the music, the appeal of *Rainbow Warrior* videos on MTV and the base it provides for in-school environmental lessons have been very effective in reaching kids, believes Kate Karam, project director.

Besides "providing a redeeming and constructive alternative to the distressingly vacant programming often provided for our kids," notes Peter Dykstra, media director of Greenpeace, these projects help young people realize that saving the earth begins at home. As Captain Planet might put it: *The Power Is Yours.*

Kerry Gerot is assistant editor of Media&Values.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM? WHERE DOES IT GO?

By Tyrone Cashman

When I was growing up in a small Midwestern town, my mother almost always knew which farms the meat, the potatoes and the corn on our table were raised on. From our upstairs window we could see the water tower where our water came from. We played by the wells that fed the tower. We kids had learned about the workings of the local sewage plant, and we knew what the water looked like that flowed from it into the river and on down to the next town. We had visited the dump and knew how the garbage got there, and what was done to it then. It is true that we didn't know where the cloth in our clothes came from, or which trees had been felled to make the paper in our school pads. But we did understand how most of our world was connected.

The media aid and abet us in our daily efforts to pretend the world isn't interconnected.

Tyrone Cashman

Over the four decades since my childhood, the supply lines for most of us have become much longer. Few Americans have any idea where their food and fuel comes from, or which river or bay is flavored by their flushwater. It is a rare person who knows where the garbage she produces comes to rest.

All of our supplies still connect us to the world. An environmental price was paid for the rubber in the soles of my shoes, for the paper towel I use and throw away, for the packaging around my new computer, for a hamburger, for each gallon of gas I buy and burn. Sometimes the price is small, sometimes it is great. But *I don't know*, anymore, what the environmental cost is for the objects that fuel my life.

As this development occurred, television entered our lives. Like an electronic telescope it allows us to see at a distance. By showing pictures from around the world, the "telescope" has the ability to track the longer lines of supply for us. Once again we have the power to learn what ecological price is paid at both the supply and effluent ends of our life support systems. If we want to know the costs, they can be shown.

But an odd thing happened once people got used to not knowing what was at the end of their umbilical cords. We began pretending the world was not designed in an interconnected way. We've come to pretend that each of our "goods" somehow originates from money rather than from a particular farm field, forest hillside or cranny in a local ecosystem. Children now think that milk comes from cartons. Manufacturers think that wheat, tin and gypsum come from the commodities market. And we all pretend we can get away with thinking the world exists in this fragmented way, because it helps us avoid responsibility. Our unawareness gives us permission to be lavish. Instead of showing us reality, the media aid and abet us in our daily efforts to pretend the world isn't interconnected.

Any real awareness of the web of life has to begin with an unfragmented perception of our immediate surroundings. By keeping our eyes on the television set (like having a telescope strapped to the face), we can ignore our immediate surroundings for hours, weeks, years.

Events on the evening news are far away. The actors and commentators who appear on it are not in my environment. They require no commitment and they offer me no way to connect to them. Yet they visit my living room every night.

As I sit watching, the scene shifts quickly from five dead Kurdish mothers and children poisoned by nerve gas at the hands of their own government, to a Washington politician denying sexual and/or financial improprieties, to a convincing actor telling me that I will be more successful coping with stress in the office if I take two pain-killing pills of the brand he assures me is better than all others. The only connective links between these disparate events are the anchorpersons offering me a mixture of distant ruined lives and happy talk in order to keep me watching commercial lies.

Staying Speedy

Our long-term attention to such images fragments our thinking and blunts our feelings. Because my daily life does not intersect with the people I see and hear in any natural way, I seem to have no stake in their lives. Thus, news becomes gossip, and I as viewer become a mere curious onlooker, a kind of busybody. Our real mutual connections as human beings and co-inhabitors of the same planet become lost.

Electronic media insulate us from the environment in another way. Their instant scene switching help us stay speedy. We could not endure a lifestyle in the fast lane with its tight deadlines, constant interruptions, decisions made too quickly on insufficient data and frequent unpredictable emergencies, if we were used to living as natural people attuned to the rhythms of the earth.

After a hectic day, an evening in front of the television set allows me to physically stop, to let my body down into a chair, but still maintain my mental, stomach and muscle tension in sync with the pace and

violence of the nightly news or the suspense of a murder mystery followed by a couple of 90 mph car chases. Viewing allows me to "relax" without losing the special adrenalin high that accompanies a successful, competitive life.

Once at that high cruising speed, it is too painful to come down. Its intensity makes us feel alive, but the feeling is an illusion. Our attempts to stay at speed flatten the real world down to the two dimensions of the TV screen. Our judgments are limited to our reading of the constricted patterns within those few inches of the screen.

The comfort of the speeding images is seductive. But only when we slow down enough for the peripheral world to come into focus do we begin to hear and see and feel the detail of our lives and the truth and sadness of our own hearts. Only when we begin to replace the tube's images of reality with our own experience will we regain awareness of our place in nature and relearn the immense debt we owe to the natural world for the clothes in our closet, the gas in our gas tanks and the food on the table.

Tyrone Cashman is a Senior Fellow of the Center for Studies in Science and Spirituality, San Francisco.

How We Connect

It takes only one summer for a child of the right age to bond with the natural world, to know in her bones that the world is alive and wild and kin to her. There is a kind of imprinting that either takes place, or doesn't, in a girl or boy before the age of 10 or 11.

As long as the wilderness survives, there is a place for this bonding to occur. As long as there are unspoiled natural places near enough for us to reach them and spend enough time in them, our children can have that inner awakening and sense of connection.

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH THOMAN

But it can never happen through media. Television's nature programs are wonderful. They must continue. They are probably the most important programming produced in our time. But we humans cannot form that essential bond through the tube.

The majesty, the power, the presence of a world uncreated by humans and uncorrupted by them cannot be reduced to the size of a TV screen, or glossy photographs in beautiful magazines, not even to the wrap-around screen of an Omni theater. Something essential is stripped from nature when it comes as a mediated image instead of a direct encounter.

When, for the first time, a nine-year-old barefoot boy and a wild crawfish encounter each other by surprise in a cold spring creek, there is nothing like it in the world. The boy's life is changed. And if he explores this watery world and the woods that surround it for the length of a long summer, he will have taken the whole ancient biosphere into his soul, never to be forgotten. The imprint is for a lifetime.

But if those imprintable years are allowed to pass for a boy or girl with only vicarious, mediated experience of nature, it is likely that as adults they will never be able to understand why a mountain forest is anything more than a pretty scene for a postcard or potential boardfeet or pulpwood for the commodities market.

—Tyrone Cashman

CHALLENGING THE CONSUMER CULTURE

The Greening of Corporate America

By Ian McGregor-Brown

The green bandwagon is rolling through corporate North America, redefining the relationship between profit and social responsibility. Over the past several decades, as employers have been prodded by unions and the feminist movement, the bottom line has come to include such things as worker safety, pension plans and maternity leave. Now the environmental movement is fueling another expansion of the business mind.

To be sure, as the new decade begins, the ecological awakening of corporate America is still a hazy vision of stores stocked with environmentally friendly products from socially responsible companies. According to this vision, the successful products of the '90s will be sparsely packaged, contain few chemicals and be less advertised.

As Craig Simpson, CEO of the Foster/McCann-Erickson advertising agency in Toronto, sees it, "Claims for whiter, brighter washes will change to talk about biodegradable cleansing agents. Instead of which hamburger tastes better, it will be which comes in biodegradable packaging. I can even see babies cutely wrapped in their *new* cloth diapers, walking in the woods admiring all the trees that didn't have to be cut down."

Imagine the transformation of the business culture if this vision spreads. Picture for a moment a world in which getting caught with your environmental pants down is a CEO's worst nightmare—a world in which "ethical neutrality" has vanished from corporate boardrooms. In its place directors debate social and moral issues as if they mattered. Imagine a vibrant capitalism in which consumption and advertising have become controversial issues—heavily advertised products now face consumer boycotts—and the bestselling books on management philosophy (printed on recycled paper, of course) tell corporations how to grow a social conscience.

Consumption itself is finally becoming controversial for the first time in the history of capitalism.

In this scenario of the not-too-distant future, Third World nations will be demanding we pay the full cost of our voracious consumption and the global damage it creates. Environmental monkey-wrenching groups will launch nationwide PR campaigns with slogans like "Curb your consumption," and "Think twice before you buy." The one big issue facing all nations on earth will be how to achieve a sustainable economy without self-destructing.

In the global business culture of the 21st Century, American management will probably move ever closer to the Japanese model of worker involvement. At shareholders' meetings and in boardrooms, long-range market share will take precedence over quarterly profits. Bottom-up decision-making and a lifelong employment ethic will fire up imaginations on the factory floor. The American "cowboy" manager with his hire-and-fire ways will be a joke from the bad old

days. A new breed of corporate executives donning work jackets will mingle freely with employees at all levels in the spirit of teamwork.

The greening of corporate North America is a tantalizing vision of promise and renewal. Just as greed and over-consumption set the standard for this century, teamwork and social responsibility may dominate the next.

Ian McGregor-Brown is a Vancouver, British Columbia writer and filmmaker. This article originally appeared in ADBUSTERS Quarterly.

Karen Danese is an art major at California State University, Los Angeles.

To Market, To Market— Shopping With a Mission

By Connie Koenenn

There's a new order of shopper in consumerland: Men and women on a mission, customers with a moral tone.

Pushing their grocery carts up and down the supermarket aisles, they are the ultimate label-readers, examining bottles of detergent, dishwashing liquid, glass cleaner and air deodorizers for biodegradibility and absence of phosphates, picking soaps and fabric softeners in refill packages or packs, choosing shampoo and toothpaste from companies that don't do animal testing.

They comb through the coffee filters to find a brand that is unbleached, look for baby diapers that are biodegradable and chemical free, sort through produce for organically-grown fruits and vegetables, make special trips to a store that sells recyclable motor oil and, above all, reject any product that comes sealed in redundant layers of plastic.

Color them green.

And brace yourself for a '90s tide of "Green Consumers," a swarm of grownup yuppies who look for, and increasingly demand, environmentally responsible products with the same vigor that they gobbled up VCRs, designer clothes, condominiums and BMWs in the 1980s.

Now they are shopping green: Asking for products that supposedly sustain the environment rather than damage it, which support natural resources rather than destroy them.

As they push environmentalism from its traditional niche in health food stores and co-ops into mainstream supermarkets, they are turning the retail field upside down, fueling hundreds of tiny new businesses, raising the stock of environmental mail-order companies and asking a multitude of questions about labeling as new products bounce onto the shelves in response to consumer demands.

"Great conflicts lie ahead as it becomes apparent that simply not buying things will help the earth more than natural, recyclable, biodegradable products."

Helen Cordes, ***Utne Reader***

"We are witnessing a green revolution on the shelves of America's stores," declared Minnesota Attorney General Hubert Humphrey III, who convened an unprecedented public forum in March 1990, bringing together a task force of attorneys general, federal officials, environmental groups and business representatives to study the "environmentally friendly" claims of a host of new products.

The whole process seems to have occurred almost overnight. "It's like a spiritual consciousness-raising on a mass scale," says Jeff Hutner of Santa Monica, California, a corporate development consultant who is "moving into the environmental product and service industry arena for the '90s" and is writing a business plan for an ecological department store.

"For the first time in history," he said, "it seems like everybody on the planet is focused on the same concern—the environment."

Although that might be an exaggeration, the magnitude and momentum of the movement does seem exceptional, even in a society fueled by fads. Like a rapidly emerging species, the Green Consumer is being identified by trendwatchers from coast to coast, sightings that all seem to lead to the same conclusion: Green is in. The phenomenon is propelled by individual U.S. consumers who spend an estimated $3.5 trillion per year on goods and services. According to a 1989 Gallup Poll, 76 percent think of themselves as environmentalists.

In Manhattan, marketing consultant Faith Popcorn of the trend-tracking Brain Reserves, Inc., who coined the word cocooning, has labeled the new consumer trend S.O.S. (Save Our Society), and says

Consumption Turned Upside Down

What would our world be like if:

- Luxury cars no longer symbolized success, but an anti-social lifestyle?
- Our $100-billion advertising industry sold ideas instead of products?
- Half the ads on TV featured social, political and environmental messages?
- TV programming itself were transformed as ecologically concerned advertisers refuse to sponsor decadent lifestyle programs like *Dallas*?
- The mass media were increasingly run, not for but *by* the masses?

How Green is Green?

As words like "throwaway" and "disposable" are replaced by "natural," and "organic" in product advertising, consumers will have an increasing need to be cautious, according to a report on "Green Consumerism and Eco-Labels" in the Spring 1990 *Earth Island Journal*. (See Resources p. 23.)

Guidebooks to environmental buying have become a publishing phenomenon even as various environmental and consumer organizations compete to found eco-labeling programs.

"Establishment of a successful U.S. eco-labeling program requires not only pressure from consumers and manufacturers but also government support and the creation of an independent laboratory to handle assessment, testing and certification," cautions Petra Losch in a wrapup of eco-labeling and related issues in the environmental journal.

European nations, who came to these issues first, still have trouble agreeing on uniform product standards, Losch says. In the meantime, her sources say, the U.S. recycling industry not yet been able unable to agree on how to standardize a small-scale, recycling-only labeling program.

In the meantime, it's buyer be wary. And obviously, the first ecologically friendly product to shop for is a green consumer guide.

it describes a major shift in consumer priorities from rampant consumerism to social consciousness. "After a decade of greed and glitz, consumers are ready to look beyond their needs, think 'green' and global and give back to society," proclaims Popcorn.

"Having seen overflowing landfills, consumers realize that their garbage adds to this problem." The implications, she thinks, will reach beyond the supermarket shelves to such diverse areas as new home construction (houses will incorporate recycling bins and compost drawers) to corporate ethics (petfood manufacturers will donate funds to fight cruelty to animals and toy companies will help combat child abuse).

On the Yankelovich monitor, an annual study of the social values of Americans, the issue of environmental concern measured so high in 1989 that "we thought there had been an error in tabulation," said Harry Hiner, West Coast vice president of Yankelovich Clancy Shulman marketing research firm.

In the mid-'80s, interest in the environment measured so low on Yankelovich's list of annually monitored values, or trends, that it was dropped because it was "not an impactful issue any more." In 1989, the research firm reinserted the category, only to discover it had gone from 16 percent to 28 percent of respondents who are almost activists. "That's very high," Hiner said.

"We also found that only seven percent of the respondents had no concern at all about the environment. That significant a change over only three years is unprecedented in our 20-year history.

"There's no question in our minds that this is not merely a fad, it is instead a permanent change in the way Americans will deal with environmental issues," he added. "We believe it has gone beyond a public issue and become a personal problem."

Yankelovich expects to see the new environmentalism manifest itself decisively at the supermarket. "It will be like nutrition, which began in the mid-'70s with people paying a little more attention to their diets and developed into different eating habits in the '80s," he said. "The signs are already there."

Clearly, the old image of the 1970s environmentalist who symbolically destroyed an automobile with a sledgehammer before retiring to live in the Vermont woods is passé.

"What we are now realizing is that every time you open your wallet you are casting a vote for or against the environment. That's a new observation," said Joel Makower, a Washington-based environmental and consumer journalist who has just compiled *The Green Consumer Guide*, a comprehensive shopping guide that is just reaching the stores this week from Penguin Books.

His book is a revised and expanded edition for American audiences of an earlier version of the guide by John Elkington and Julia Hailes that has been a continuing best seller in England since it was published in 1988.

The new book is organized in three parts, opening with an overview of green consumerism in America and looking at key issues such as packaging and plastics. Part two breaks the marketplace down by key categories from automobiles to personal care products, and suggests what to buy and what to avoid.

"A lot of social and political flows coming together today make the environment more personal than it was in the '70s, and it doesn't get more personal than a trip to the grocery store or hardware store," Makower notes.

He adds that "virtually every consumer goods manufacturer is feverishly working to repackage, reformulate and reposition their product to meet the new demand." What we can expect, he predicts, is fewer overpackaged products and many more products that are "green." But "Don't fool yourself," Makower cautions. "Companies are going to make a lot of money making their products green. There are lots of shades, and very few perfectly green products."

The whole process of buying and using is going to require massive consumer reeducation, he believes. "The products will constantly be changing, but the rules of the game don't change." For tomorrow's Green Consumers, the rules of the game are still evolving.

Connie Koenenn is a staff writer for the Los Angeles Times. *Copyright, 1990,* Los Angeles Times. *Reprinted by permission.*

"After a decade of greed and glitz, consumers are ready to look beyond their needs, think 'green' and global, and give back to society."

Faith Popcorn, Marketing Consultant

Freeing Ourselves From Our Devil's Bargain with Advertising

By Kalle Lasn and Cat Simril

In the privacy of our living rooms we've made a devil's bargain with the advertising industry: Give us an endless flow of free programs and we'll let you spend 12 minutes of every hour promoting consumption.

> *"Today's ads tell us what to buy. Tomorrow's could invite us to think."*
>
> **ADBUSTERS Quarterly**

For a long time it seemed to work. The ads grated on our nerves and over the years they expanded into a whopping 20 percent of our TV time, but even so it seemed a small price to pay for television programming.

Now we're beginning to learn what all that "free" entertainment has cost us. The answers are in the daily papers and the nightly news: a warming planet, a punctured ozone layer, vanishing forests, recurring oil spills, daily species extinctions and acid rain destroying our lakes and rivers.

Almost every evening we see news items on environmental disasters followed by cheery spots for luxury goods. It's time we learned that these two sides to television aren't separate. Indeed, they create each other.

Sooner or later, each of us will have to face a private moment of reckoning and ask the unaskable: "Am I living in harmony with my environment? Do I fit into nature? Does my community, my city, my country?"

For North Americans, the answer is almost surely no. We are only five percent of the world's population, but we consume one-third of its resources and produce about half the non-organic waste. With this record in mind, it's getting harder and harder to deny our consumption-fueled responsibility.

Now in hindsight—facing the third millennium on an increasingly damaged planet—it's becoming clear that somewhere along the way we sold our souls.

What we didn't realize when we made our pact with the advertisers was that their agenda would eventually become the heart and soul of television. We have allowed the most powerful communications tool ever invented to become the command center of a consumer society, defining our lives and culture the way family, community and spiritual values once did.

How can we renegotiate the bargain and get our souls back when most of us can't conceive of a a world without consumption, a world whose economy isn't fueled by the endless hunger for material goods?

We can let our televisions keep on chanting their consumption mantras and pretend there's nothing wrong with our way of life, or we can start taking control of what we see. Breaking the bonds of the consumption ethic leaves us free to imagine the world we want. Only then can we move toward it.

Kalle Lasn and Cat Simril are co-editors of ADBUSTERS Quarterly *published by The Media Foundation, a Vancouver-based society dedicated to redefining the way the media are used in North America.*

Re:Action

Canadian Ads Fight Conspicuous Consumption

Scene 1:
A young man with his head trapped inside a TV set appears on the screen. As he tries desperately to wrench it off his shoulders, a message flashes: "TV Addiction: North America's Number One Mental Health Problem."

Scene 2:
An animated pig frolics on the map of North America. A voice says: "Five percent of the people in the world consume one-third of its resources and produce half its toxic wastes. These people are us." The pig rolls over and burps.

Advertising can promote consciousness and conscience as well as consumption. Imagine "idea" ads invading the 12 minutes per hour now reserved for product ads. And it's easier than you think. The Media Foundation produced four Tubehead TV addiction spots like the ones described here for under $4,000. Film professionals donated their time and skills and the ads cost only $268 to air on CBC in British Columbia for a month of appearances on both a rock video and a children's show. Think about what you could do in your local market.

With one well-conceived ad campaign, "disposable" could be made a dirty word. TV spots can sell products, but they can also be used to debate the vital issues of our time. The airwaves belong to the people. It's time we took them back.

Broadcast quality videos of Tubehead spots are available free of charge from The Media Foundation. Or create your own public interest ads with the help of local film professionals.

—ADBUSTERS Quarterly

Subscriptions and broadcast quality videos of its ads can be obtained by writing to: The Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6H 1B7. *(See Resources p. 23.)*

REFLECTION/ACTION

Tools to build media awareness for groups, classes, families

YOUTH

Using TV Specials As Teaching Tools

By Myra Junyk

The *Earth Day Special*'s tale of a dying Mother Earth was seen by millions of young people on April 22, 1990. Obviously, the rudimentary plot, in which Bette Midler personified Mother Earth, was not the draw. The program's attraction lay in several elements: the media buildup to Earth Day events around the world, increasing consciousness of environmental issues and the attraction of watching all those celebrities presenting tips on becoming environmentally responsible.

Media events like this special can provide an excellent base for young people to explore complex questions about how our society handles environmental issues. While no thinking person would deny the importance of the environment, the commercial background that underlies all such programming is still open to analysis.

Young people should not be fooled into thinking that the very companies who contributed to the environmental mess we are in today will become the environmental leaders of the future.

Debriefing this program can help young viewers increase their consumer awareness. They can also be applied to any programming that struggles to blend information with entertainment values:

- Is the program merely factual, or does it blend facts and opinion? If it presents both, how do we separate them?
- Have the complex events portrayed been simplified for a general audience? If so, what important details were left out of the presentation? Why was this done?
- How effective was the program in encouraging changes in environmental behavior? Did you change your behavior as a result of the show?
- Was the associated advertising appropriate? Can you think of any other ways of paying for such a program? Were there any participating advertisers that you were suprised to see?

We don't see specials about Earth Day every day. But every day is not too often to understand the commercialism that underlies even the best-intentioned programming. And Earth Day is a good time to start.

Myra Junyk heads the English department at Notre Dame High School in Toronto.

Re:Action

Making Connections

From the foothills of Asia to the Amazon rain forests, from the smoggy streets of Los Angeles to the murky waters of the Mediterranean, a 10-part PBS series, *Race to Save the Planet*, premiering October 4, 1990, will tackle today's complex environmental issues and explore what we must do to create a sustainable global future.

A ***Viewer's Guide*** to the series, focusing on the ethical and spiritual implications of the environmental crisis, is available from the North American Conference on Religion and Ecology. The cost is $3 for a single copy. Purchase of the ***Facilitator's Resource Guide*** ($15) includes 25 copies of the individual *Viewer's Guide* and additional group materials. It is an excellent resource on environmental stewardship for conscientious viewers as well as study groups of all faiths.

Send payment with order to NACRE, Drawer M/V, 5 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

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WOMEN

Frontline Mothers Deserve To Be Heard

By Sally Steenland

In the 1970s, a homemaker and mother named Lois Gibbs became a public speaker and political advocate on environmental issues when her town in Love Canal, New York, was discovered to be contaminated by toxic wastes. Hundreds of poisonous waste dumps have been uncovered nationwide since then, many of them in residential areas and near schools.

The leaders in the battle to find these toxic sites, identify the pollutants, document area illness and death rates and pressure the private and public sector to eliminate the hazards have been women—especially mothers. Women with little history of political activism have been radicalized in the process of fighting threats to their families' safety.

Political pollsters in the mid-'80s spotted these pockets of environmental activism across the country. They noted that concern about these issues cut across liberal/conservative lines and that it centered on women. Often, it seems, along with child care and maternity leave, the environment is a women's issue.

But most of the time you'd never learn that from listening to, reading or watching the news. When an environmental story appears, are any women quoted or interviewed? Why are local activists and female community leaders invisible to reporters and news directors?

Instead, stories about the environment

The issue of values in today's media is not having all the answers but asking the right questions.

—***Media&Values*** **Editorial Philosophy**

tend to feature the "experts"—men with advanced scientific degrees—as well as (male) political officials and heads of organizations. Often, it seems, media fail to seek out qualified women experts. But a skewed definition of news that concentrates on expert testimony instead of the efforts of ordinary citizens lies at the heart of the imbalance.

What we all need is less theoretical discussion and more good examples. With a broader definition of news, women are more likely to be included. Monitor your media to see that they are.

If you're active in local environmental issues, pay attention to your group's actual work compared to the media coverage of it. Have your newspaper, radio and TV stations accurately reflected what you're doing? If they're doing a good job, call or write the reporters involved and let them know. If not, give them some thoughtful feedback.

The whistle-blowing of these frontline Moms deserves to be heard around the planet. Only when we know the problems of every hearth can we take steps to save the planetary home we all share.

Sally Steenland is media director of the National Commission on Working Women of Wider Opportunities for Women.

CHILDREN

Finding Some Green Lessons in Fast Food

By Judith M. Myers-Walls

Children respond well to events such as Earth Day. Youth group projects, school lessons and community activities combined with media programs to forge a cause around which children could rally.

But what can children do now that the celebration is over? How can they introduce continuing changes into their lives? And what does all of this have to do with their interactions with the media?

In order for children to understand and act on causes like the environmental movement they need concrete ideas with which they can identify. Like adults, they need to become conscious of everyday activities that impact their environment.

Raising children's awareness of the environmental effects of fast-food packaging is one way to connect environmental issues with the day to day events in children's lives. Most parents are familiar with the lure of fast food meals and the way the constant merchandising of McDonald's, Burger King and other chains appeal to their child customers.

A simple experiment can help children learn about the environmental impact of the polystyrene that encloses their hamburgers and fries. Layer a glass jar with gravel and moistened dirt and add some typical trash, including paper and polystyrene. Cover this with more dirt and add more layers as desired. Keep the material for a week or two. The contrast in the nature of the remains can help children focus on the problems created by the packaging of their favorite treats. Lessons about the effects of Latin American beef production on rainforests can also be part of the discussion.

This and similar experiments can provide a framework for children to define their own personal goals. They can discuss whether to avoid restaurants that use polystyrene, buy only sandwiches wrapped in paper, choose reataurants that use reusable dishes and/or write to the companies that produce the trash—and the TV commercials.

If children can learn to see the relationships between the advertising, the programming and their own choices, a major shift in their environmental thinking can begin. Like the rest of us, they need to learn that they can make a difference.

Judith Myers-Walls is associate professor of child development at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana.

MINORITIES

Ecological Reporters Awaken to Ethnicity

By Carlos E. Cortés

At first glance it looked like The Return of the Rainbow Coalition. First Whoopie Goldberg, then Edward James Olmos took the platform to rouse the crowd to action.

But it wasn't a minority rally. It was Earth Day. And it brought viewers the all-too-rare media coverage of minority figures speaking out on issues other than specific minority ones. Moreover, the media have begun to examine the relationship between general and minority environmental concerns. Coverage this spring of pollution-caused cancer clusters in largely black industrial towns in the Mississippi Delta are one of a number of recent examples. It's about time!

Commanding little media attention, minority people have long struggled with local ecological problems like toxic-waste disposal and lead-paint poisoning. Yet they have generally kept their distance from mainstream environmental movements and leaders, who seemed mesmerized by the big picture and national media-attracting hoopla, while often appearing unreceptive to minority participation and unresponsive to their environmental concerns. (In a January 1990 letter, civil rights leaders criticized eight national environmental groups for their hiring practices and general disregard for local environmental problems facing low-income minority communities.)

Over the years, media have done little

Re:Action

Checking Out the Environment

Your local video store can be a goldmine for films that involve environmental themes.

- ***"The Bear"*** (1989). Excellent photography and ultimate honesty but marred by some Disney-style hokeyness.
- ***"Gorillas in the Mist"*** (1988). An uneven soap opera but the potent scenes of poaching will educate and energize all wildlife lovers.
- ***"The Emerald Forest"*** (1984). Flawed but interesting adventure of a dam engineer who comes to regret his role in Amazon deforestation.
- ***"Never Cry Wolf"*** (1983). This gem about a biologist studying wolves treats nature more freshly than any other recent film; stunning cinematography.
- ***"The China Syndrome"*** (1979). Heart-stopping thriller about the perils of nuclear power à la Three Mile Island.

—Reviewed by Tom O'Brien, author of The Screening of America: Movies and Values from Rocky to Rain Man.

to enlighten readers and viewers about these concerns. At other times, media coverage of environmental issues has ignored critical minority dimensions.

A case in point. The May 1, 1990 *Los Angeles Times* carried a lengthy front-page article on the Grand Canyon pollution cause by the coal-fired Navajo Generating Station. While the article addressed the need to improve plant emission controls so tourists could enjoy a better view of the canyon, not once did it mention the Navajo and Hopi people who breathe the plant's emissions every day.

John Galsworthy once wrote, "Idealism increases in direct proportion to one's distance from the problem." For too long, media coverage of the environment has focused on far-away mountains and wilderness. Threats to them deserve coverage but so do the poisoning of city air and water, the kind of close-at-home environmental problems that affect the day-to-day lives and health of millions.

For most minority people, environmentalism means crucial local struggles for a better life, not glib slogans and high-visibility public rallies. Media need to provide greater and more sensitive coverage of the broad range of ecological issues, including local problems faced by minority communities. Their ability to do this will be a crucial step toward improved understanding and cooperation between minority community members and mainstream environmentalists.

Carlos Cortés is professor of history at the University of California/Riverside.

Setting the Record Straight

Media&Values wishes to correct two errors that appeared in recent issues. Berkeley screenwriter Karen Folger Jacobs was incorrectly identified as Lynn Jacobs in "The Many Faces of Media Women," Issue #49, *Redesigning Women*. Seattle Mayor Norm Rice was incorrectly identified as Nora Rice in "Seattle Paper Fights Newsroom Racism," Issue #50, *News for the '90s*. We regret any confusion or inconvenience.

INTERNATIONAL

Missing the People for the Trees

By Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn

The First World tends to see the Amazon in terms of trees rather than people. Although tribe after tribe of Indians has been exterminated through the decades, and hundreds of rural organizers harassed and murdered across the region, such crimes have scarcely been a preoccupation of the North American media.

Media treatment of the death of Chico Mendes was an exception to this pattern. When the rubber tapper leader was gunned down outside his house in Xapuri in December 1988, the story of his assasination went around the world. Yet the way in which this widely publicized murder was reported told only part of the story.

Mendes was described over and over again as an environmentalist, locked in conflict with ranchers and land speculators but still apparently secluded from class conflict or politics. His struggle was seen in terms of trees and not justice.

But Mendes was one of the founding members of the Workers Party, Brazil's mass-based party of the left, and was also active in a network of rural base communities organized by the Catholic Church.

The idea of "extractive reserves" conceived by him and his fellow rubber tappers challenged traditional property relationships in Brazil by proposing collective ownership and cooperative marketing of forest products. They removed land from the domain of the speculator.

It might be naive to expect North American reports from the corporate mainstream to see Mendes in context. But his canonization as some kind of St. Frances of the Forest renders journalists blind to the region's bloody realities.

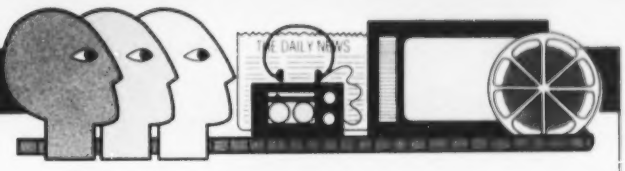
The group of landowners that organized his murder believe any encroachment on the rights of property is communism. In the campaign to defend their property rights (very often their own thefts) they take the law into their own hands.

Throughout the Amazon, people fall regularly as they try to defend their ways of life and bits of land. The overall picture is one of savage and continuous pressure by landlords, backed up by violence and ignored by the state. This is the "normalcy" that is almost never described to North Americans.

What the North American media cannot deal with in any consistent way is the fact that the future of the Amazon rainforest—which editors perceive rightly to be a concern for many of their customers—will be fought out on political terrain in the idiom of socialist priorities: common ownership of assets, collective forms of marketing and credit.

No mainstream American journalists discuss the Amazon, or any other part of the world, in such terms. They don't see the fight for human rights in such a perspective. But Chico Mendes did. He was concerned about trees, but saw the fundamental issue as one of property.

Susanna Hecht is an agronomist and an associate professor in the Graduate School of Planning at the University of California/Los Angeles. Alexander Cockburn is a columnist for The Nation. *They are the authors of* The Fate of the Forest. *This article was excerpted with permission from the Summer 1989 issue of* Extra!, *130 W. 25th St., NY, NY 10001.*



BRANDS Я US:

How Ads Reflect Our Consumer Society

By Stephen Garey

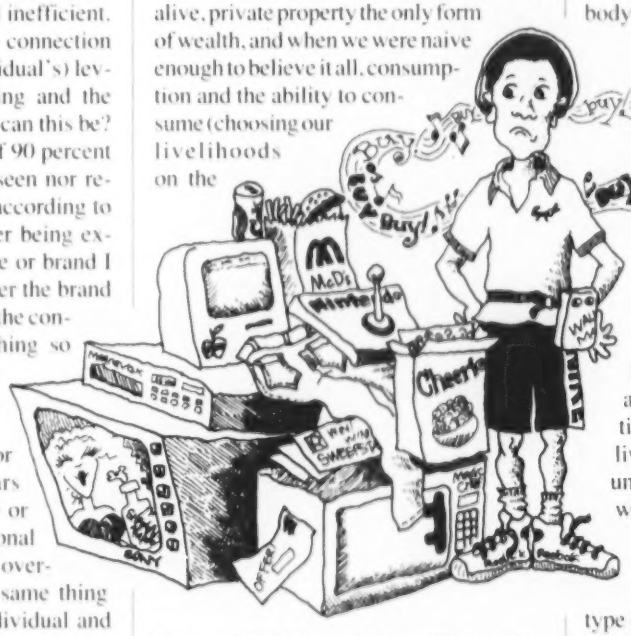
Hyundai tells us that their cars make sense, Apple Computer offers us the power to be our best, and most of us don't believe a word of it. The fact is, when all is said and done, most people don't believe, don't remember, don't even notice, most advertising. This has always been so and always will be so. The vast majority of advertising is ineffective and inefficient.

And yet, there is a direct connection between a society's (or individual's) levels of exposure to advertising and the levels of consumption. How can this be? If advertising is inefficient, if 90 percent of all advertising is neither seen nor remembered by most people (according to surveys), if two minutes after being exposed to a particular message or brand I can no longer remember either the brand or the message, then where's the connection? How does something so banal and benign impact my consumption patterns and habits?

The message cited above for Hyundai automobiles ("Cars That Make Sense") has little or no effect either upon our personal lives or even Hyundai's sales overall. And we could say the same thing about thousands of other individual and isolated advertiser efforts. But the Hyundai advertising, combined with Apple Computer's advertising, combined with advertising for Tide detergent and Chivas Regal and RCA and Johnson's Floor Wax and the limited-time specials at your local department store or supermarket, has a very powerful collective effect indeed: it instructs us to Buy!

And it gives us, via lighthearted entertainment, permission to ignore the long-term consequences of our purchasing decisions by suggesting to us that we should not take any of this too seriously. (We shouldn't take a spilled glass of water too seriously, either. But a flood is a totally different matter.)

Advertising's real message, to buy and to buy ever more, to replace what we have rather than repair what we have, at one time served us well. When we were smaller in numbers, when we were still growing, still searching for a collective identity, when personal prosperity was touted as the primary reason for being alive, private property the only form of wealth, and when we were naive enough to believe it all, consumption and the ability to consume (choosing our livelihoods on the basis of whether or not it provided us with that ability!) was not only a way of life, it was a respectable one at that.



But we are no longer small in numbers. And we are no longer that naive. We can plainly see that advertising's collective power and our collective response to it has had, and continues to have, a profound and adverse effect upon our personal lives and upon the planet we share.

But pointing a finger at the advertising industry will change nothing. Wishing and hoping that the advertising industry will lose its innocence and suddenly leap into modern times in recognition of the situation we are all in is futile. And while the advertising industry is part and parcel of an industrial civilization now in decline, this doesn't mean we should expect the number of advertising messages and collective power of those messages to also decline in the very near future. If anything, it means we can expect an increase in the number of those messages. For the advertising industry, along with the main body of industrial society, is struggling for survival. It may be drowning, but it has not yet sunk. And in a last-ditch effort to save itself, it will flail about more wildly and make more noise than ever, as we might expect from any drowning individual.

No, what must change is us. What must change is how we see advertising in the context of the modern moment. We must recognize that its influence upon our lives and our well-being is in direct proportion to the amount of exposure in our lives, and that this exposure is an event unto itself, an experience separate from whether or not we respond to or believe individual messages.

High consumption has far more impact upon our environment than type of consumption. Buying much less and driving much less is better than just switching from plastic to paper or from "normal" unleaded to "super" unleaded. One of the first steps we must take towards consuming fewer goods is to consume less advertising.

Stephen Garey is the co-founder of Stephen Garey & Associates, a Los Angeles advertising group that represents only earth-conscious products.

TURN THE PAGE FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS YOU MAY FREELY COPY THESE TWO PAGES FOR DISCUSSION OR GROUP ACTIVITY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Six Ways to Reduce Advertising in Your Life

Greater awareness of advertising's role in your life can help make you a conscious, instead of an automatic, consumer.

1. ***Don't be a walking advertisement.*** Remove those labels, tags and other symbols from your jeans and steer clear of T-shirt advertising, "alligator" shirts and clothing with designer logos. Why should you be an unpaid billboard?

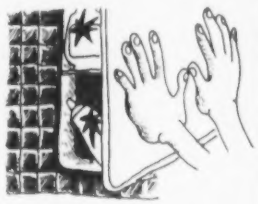
2. ***Keep your counter clear of brand names.*** Whenever possible, transfer liquid soaps, cereals, cookies, nuts, juices and the like from their brand-identified store-bought containers into plain, general-purpose jars and cannisters. Or remove brand I.D. labels from store containers (but make sure the product is still clearly identifiable).

3. ***Take the road less traveled.*** Avoiding main highways and using local streets can help you sidestep the major arteries and commercial avenues in your locale. This will go a long way towards reducing your exposure to outdoor advertising and may even help you get to know your town or city a little better.

4. ***Reduce or eliminate junk mail.*** Department stores and local merchants will stop sending you flyers and other advertising if you ask them to. Many local direct-mail associations will also serve as clearinghouses for a request to eliminate junk mail. Check your phone directory for local listings or write to the national organization, Junk Mail Busters, Ste. 5038, 4 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA 94111.

5. ***Divest your possessions of brand names.*** Appliances, stereo components, computers, TV sets, telephones, sometimes even furniture almost all display prominent logos, but you don't have to live with them. Often you can cover them with tape or water-soluble colors, unscrew them or peel them away without damaging the item. (When resale value and slight damage are not concerns, you can obliterate them.)

6. ***Keep your branded items hidden.*** Store toothpastes in the medicine cabinet, detergents out of sight and return everyday foods or other frequently-used items that can't be transferred to alternate containers to cabinets immediately after use.



There are probably dozens of other ways to lower advertising consumption. See how many you can think of. Remember: the idea is to keep exposure to logos and brand names in your household as low as possible and to reduce it whenever and wherever possible.

It's impossible to totally eliminate advertising from your life completely, and if you could, you wouldn't want to. Much advertising serves a useful function by providing information about products and services, supporting mass distribution and helping to keep prices of some products affordable.

But ad consumption reduction can start to change the consumption-oriented mindset that makes brand names a source of status and an end in themselves.

Implementation of just one or two of these suggestions can help you begin to learn how to consume products, not advertising. And after all, isn't that the idea?

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Media&Values is a project of the Center for Media and Values, a non-profit educational organization to promote thoughtful awareness and better use of television and mass media. Membership is $30/year and includes *Media&Values* magazine. Additional contributions are tax-deductible.

Media&Values, 1962 South Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034 • (213) 559-2944

WATCH, READ, LISTEN

Resources for Follow-up

IN PRINT

• ***State of the World 1990: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society*** is the seventh annual assessment of the earth's health with project director Lester R. Brown, edited by Linda Starke. It outlines a sustainable society and a reordering of governmental policies. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110, (800) 233-4830, $9.95.

• ***Selling Science: How the Press Covers Science and Technology*** by Dorothy Nelkin investigates the constraints and biases of journalists covering science and technology and the public relations ploys of institutions, 1987. W.H. Freeman and Company, 41 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010, (801) 973-4660, $11.95.

• ***The Video Project: Films and Videos for a Safe & Sustainable World***. The 1990 catalog lists over 100 documentary programs dealing with the issues and ideas critical to the future of the earth. 5332 College Avenue, Suite 101, Oakland, CA 94618, (415) 655-9050, prices vary.

• ***"The Environment at Risk: What TV Can Do,"*** the summer 1988 issue of ***"Television&Families"*** reports on the relationship between media and the environment from its conference for producers, writers, network and studio executives. Available from: University Microfilms, Inc., Article Clearing House, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, (800) 521-0600, prices vary per article.

SIGHT/SOUND

• ***"Profit the Earth,"*** a national project of the Public Television Outreach Alliance in partnership with PBS, looks at environmental problems by focusing on the need for practical, creative solutions that are environmentally and economically sound, 60 minutes. GPN, P.O. Box 80669, Lincoln, NE 68501, (800)228-4630, $22.45 private, $52.50 public, transcript $5.

• ***"Nuclear Power and the Press"*** Features Hodding Carter probing the question of whether reporters have enough technical understanding of the nuclear industry to adequately cover it, using the Palo Verde, Arizona nuclear plant as a case in point. 30 minutes. PBS Video, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314-1698, (800) 424-7963, $50.

ORGANIZATIONS

• **Environmental Media Association**, an organization whose focus is to increase the awareness of environmental issues within the entertainment industry and to encourage the incorporation of environmental themes in film and TV, 10536 Culver Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232, (213) 559-9334. See story page 8.

• **The Media Foundation**, a society dedicated to redefining the way television is used in North America. Publishers of *ADBUSTERS Quarterly* and producers of alternative television advertising commercials, the foundation hopes to redirect over-consumption messages, 1243 West 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6H 1B7, (604) 736-9401. See story page 17.

• **Center for the Study of Commercialism**, an organization created to study, document and publicize the infusion of commercial interests into various aspects of American life in order to challenge rampant consumerism, 1501 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 332-9110.

Publish or Perish: New Magazines Cover the Earth

By Kerry Gerot

The environment has made top billing in almost every form of media from network television to wall posters so one should not be surprised to find it on the newsstand as well. Several magazines aimed at general audiences have recently been launched. Two of the new entries stand out as the most user-oriented in our daily interactions with the environment.

Garbage debuted in August 1989 with the promise to spotlight basic environmental questions. It boasts a circulation of 110,000 with 40 percent of its pages devoted to environmentally related advertising. The magazine publishes how-to pieces on topics like backyard composting, water-saving toilets and cutting home energy as well as informational pieces on issues, such as global warming, car emissions, fuel economy and organic food. Published bimonthly on recycled paper, *Garbage* stacks up as the environmental do-it-yourself magazine. P.O. Box 56519, Boulder, CO 80322, (800)274-9909, $21/year.

E debuted a few months later with the slickness to appeal to the general public and the depth to satisfy environmental activists. The nonprofit bimonthly has a circulation of 60,000 and environmentally related ads on 40 percent of its pages. The articles cover all aspects of the destruction and preservation of the planet, such as nuclear waste, rain forests, toxins, governmental policies, recycling, solar energy and more. *E* maneuvers well between educating with in-depth analysis and offering tips for action. P.O. Box 6667, Syracuse, NY 13217, (800)825-0061, $20/year.

The publishers report response has been better than expected. However, with a first-year failure rate of 80 percent for new publications the general concensus seems to be that only one will survive. Which will it be?

MAKING THE MOST of Media and the Environment

By Elizabeth Thoman, Editor

As I write this, I gaze at the cardboard cutout of a tree that's propped up next to my computer screen. On one side, above the familiar ARCO logo, its green Christmas-cookie shape is broken by a series of messages: "Rideshare." "Walk or ride a bike." "Don't top off your tank." And more. Including the underlying message of this little desk sculpture — "Buy ARCO because we care about the environment, just like you do."

I keep it on my desk as a constant reminder to pay attention to the environment — and to the media.

Consider these recent media items loosely tied to Earth Day, 1990:

• At the massive Earth Day rally in Washington, D.C., some spectators started to leave when actor Tom Cruise was briefly replaced on the podium by U.S. Senator Albert Gore. Are we more impressed with Hollywood glamour than our need for a sound environmental policy?

• At a recent environmental conference, producer Teya Ryan previewed a segment from Turner Broadcasting's new environmentally-flavored magazine show *Network Earth*. Two participants demanded that her network should broadcast, instead, a segment urging viewers to stop watching television.

• Ads sponsoring the Earth Day Special were environmentally friendly. But can one evening of environmentally-conscious ads counteract the 40,000 - 50,000 not-so-friendly commercial messages we are exposed to each year?

Few of us are wholly innocent or wholly guilty when it comes to the environment. Indeed, most of our knowledge of the environment comes to us through the media; thus, we can hardly blame "the media" when we fail to answer the cry of the earth. Preserving our environment will require a partnership between media users and media makers. In particular, we must embark together upon a thorough and honest self-examination of the media's net effect when it covers environmental issues while simultaneously promoting consumption via advertising.

This issue of *Media&Values* is only a beginning for this discussion, but it does provide a springboard for using media awareness as a catalyst for environmental change. However, the environmental challenge is wider.

Even as we begin to care for our oceans, lakes, forests and wildlife; even as we become more acutely aware of the air we breathe; we must also become concerned about the *ideas* we breathe. The ideas put forth by our media environment.

Yes, today's mass media is an environment. And it is the focus of the ongoing work of the Center for Media and Values. We are leading a national movement for media awareness, analysis, reflection — and action.

The success of this media movement depends upon a solid foundation of:

• *Memberships*. We're growing by leaps and bounds as both individuals and institutions recognize the urgent need for a movement for media awareness. But we need you, too. Join the Center today!

• *Involvement*. Use the Media and Values Workshop Kit for this issue (see index page for details) to prepare a program on "Media and the Environment" for your club or organization.

• *Funding*. Thanks to the above co-sponsors who provided from $500–$5,000 to develop and distribute this timely issue on the environment. Many others have sent smaller donations which are also deeply appreciated as we struggle to stay on the cutting edge of this new arena of social concern. Help us keep raising a voice for values by becoming a co-sponsor of a future issue.

Looking again at ARCO's cardboard cut-out, I have a vision of just how crucial the media's role in caring for the planet truly is: We are all standing at the edge of a steep cliff looking out upon our future on this earth. There are two possibilities. We can fall. Or we can fly.

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Some say that ***Media&Values*** *is ahead of its time, which means that these back issues offer you the information you need just in time to keep on top of the dynamic media age in which we live. Perhaps most helpful of all, each issue contains several unique features that make it ideal for use in classrooms, discussion groups conferences, youth programs, parenting classes and more. As the leading resource for media awareness education,* ***Media&Values*** *is an invaluable reference and tool for teachers, for leaders, for everyone concerned about the media today.*

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"...a penetrating look at how media cover environmental issues... must-reading for everyone concerned about the fate of the earth."

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"Thanks for tackling the false values of shopping mall materialism... I happily recommend this issue."

David R. Brower, chair, Earth Island Institute